CTIC Update for Midwest Cover Crop Council—2018

11th Annual Conservation in Action Tour

CTIC will be hosting our 11th annual Conservation in Action Tour in Annapolis, MD on July 10-11, 2018. We will be visiting the Eastern Shore of Maryland on the DelMarVa Peninsula on July 11th, with an evening social event to be held the evening prior at the Westin Hotel in Annapolis. On the tour, we will be seeing innovations in nutrient management, meeting innovative farmers who are voluntarily exceeding minimum requirements for conservation and efficient use of nutrients, and exploring unique partnerships that help farmers meet nutrient management standards on their farms. Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner will be served as part of the tour.

Registration for the event will be open soon. Check www.ctic.org for details.

Operational Tillage Information System (OpTIS)

CTIC is working with several partners to develop the next iteration of the national survey of tillage practices and cover crops. This survey will use remote sensing to estimate the amount of crop residue on farm fields, estimate tillage practices, and detect the presence of cover crops on ag lands to give a clearer picture of the use of these practices across the Corn Belt in 2019. Also, this project will evaluate the acreage of farmland in the Corn Belt where reduced tillage practices, cover crops and diverse crop rotations are being used as part of a multi-year soil health management system, and give estimates of acreage where these practices are used to improve soil health. Information from these analyses will be available at the HUC 8 watershed, USDA crop reporting district, and County scales from the CTIC website beginning in 2019.

Cover Crop Math

Following its conclusion in September of 2017, CTIC is now sharing what this project taught about the economic, agronomic, and environmental benefits of cover crops.
These insights include:

- An improved framework for conducting economic research on working farms
- 'Alignment' of existing agronomic and economic models to describe the relationship between cover crops, soil organic carbon, and yield.
- A literature review of economic impacts of changes to specific soil characteristics relevant to soil health
- A report on experiences participating farmers with varying levels of experience with cover crops shared during a series of facilitated forums
- Support of ongoing research on covers and N credit that informed an Extension publication on N management
- 5 demonstrations of opportunities to provide honey bee and other pollinator forage on the ag landscape
- Support of the development of a new method for identifying pollen species via DNA analysis

Results will be publicized through:

- A series of 14 feature-style case studies. A portion of these articles will be published in *Corn & Soybean Digest,* after which all 14 publications will be hosted on CTIC's website
- A report on honey bee utilization of on-farm habitat, expected late spring 2018

Supply Chain Sustainability in Iowa

CTIC recently completed the first three-year phase of an agreement with the Iowa Department of Ag and Land Stewardship to support ADM and Unilever's Sustainable Soy Continuous Improvement program. CTIC is now collaborating with stakeholders across Iowa's supply chain to design the next phase of a supply chain sustainability initiative that will reliably increase the adoption of conservation systems.

Purdue University's Natural Resources Social Science lab interviewed a set of farmers enrolled in the program and produced a report that, in part, describes whether and how those farmers used FieldPrint Calculator results and other information received through the project to inform their farm management decisions. The report is available upon request to CTIC.

The Honey Bee Health Coalition's Bee Integrated Project

CTIC has contracted with the Honey Bee Health Coalition to manage this project that is demonstrating how farmers and beekeepers can collaborate on a system of practical best management practices that improve honey bee and other pollinator health outcomes. The project integrates individual proven BMPs—both on the farm and in the hive—into a cohesive system. Results will identify considerations for transferring practices proven in the lab to real-world operations. Participating farmers and beekeepers will help share their experiences with the system to expand voluntary adoption of critical BMPs.

For Additional Information or if there are Questions

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